



AARON R. RAATZ

State Representative, District 71

Prior to running for office, Aaron Robert Raatz has worked as an Airline Pilot and serves in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

What is the biggest issue facing the state of Arkansas and how would you address this problem if elected?

Incarceration levels for non-violent crimes. If a crime does not harm any other person or entity other than it's just breaking a law then that law should be unlawful.

What would be your top 3 priorities for utilizing the surplus budget in Arkansas, if you had full power over the surplus?

Infrastructure, debt, education

How do you define public safety and what changes would you make to keep all communities safe?

Using unarmed public servants to respond to non-violent situations rather than armed officers.

What (if any) changes do you believe are needed to the criminal legal system in Arkansas?

Higher punishments for violent crimes. Little to no punishment for nonviolent crimes. Reduces laws and allow people to be free again.

The Arkansas Public Defenders Commission has been underfunded for many years. Would you support increasing funding to help bring the department in line with American Bar Association recommendations which cap caseloads at 150 felony cases per attorney? Why or why not?

Yes. Money should not determine the kind of defense or representation you have in court. Everyone regardless of income should be allowed the same quality of representation.

It has become common knowledge across the state of Arkansas that those facing health conditions concerning addiction and mental health are located at an increasing rate in the state prisons and local county jails. What solutions do you feel should be explored in this area?

Rehabilitation and assistance rather than incarceration.

Research indicates that juveniles that encounter the justice system in their youth will have a higher likelihood of entanglement with the adult criminal justice system. What strategies do you support to decrease this likelihood?

Quit putting government in the way of problems that should be handled by families.

Neuroscience research has indicated that the human brain is not fully formed until approximately age 25, meaning that impulse control and long-term thinking can be impaired. Would you consider reclassifying how Arkansas young adults are treated in the adult system? Are there specific adjustments that should/could be made?

If that is true then maybe the age requirement for military service should be increased as well as the age of purchase for controlled substances including alcohol should go up as well. Maybe keeping young adults engaged in education would also benefit.

Do you think we have a “parole problem” and how would you address it?

Understand life happens. Some people miss their check ins because life happens and they end up back in jail or prison. Talk to people. Get engaged with them.

The Arkansas Department of Corrections identified reducing solitary confinement —a practice labeled torture under international law— as a major objective in their 2021-2022 Strategic Plan, however the number of people held in isolation continues to grow. Do you agree with the need to reduce solitary confinement in our state? Why or why not?

Yes. Humans are social creatures and long term isolation tends to create other long term problems. Isolation should be reserved for murderers and rapists.

Additional Comments

The Libertarian Party I believe is against the death penalty. That is where I differ the most. I support the death penalty in violent crimes.